

## **Section 4: Goals and Objectives**

### **Goal A:**

#### *A. Goal Statement:*

The Region will support and enhance existing educational programs while exploring additional avenues to provide high quality education. This will include pre-hospital, facility, BLS and ALS education as needed by local stakeholders.

#### *B. Background:*

An educated workforce is the backbone of a high-quality health care system. Stakeholders in the Region have accepted the challenge to provide relevant, high quality education in multiple formats from the dispatch center to discharge from the emergency department. Medical directors in the Region are very interested in providing high level care and this requires education through both conferences and continuing education. Educational topics are determined through data research where possible. Additional topics are developed as medical directors stay current with research in the field and their efforts to implement clinically proven skills and medications.

#### *C. Components Addressed:*

High quality education addresses numerous aspects of a complete EMTS system. These include: Education, Clinical Care, Medical Direction, Research, and others. The development of a BLS conference in 2001 addressed a specific gap in educational resources. The start of the ALS Conference in 2019 also began to address the need for critical care continuing education. These programs are essential to continue and the development of additional opportunities across the Region are needed to continue to address these components.

#### *D. Project Description:*

Objective 1. Work with Regional stakeholders to continue the successes achieved with the rural EMS/Trauma conference.

Objective 2. Work with Regional trauma facilities to enhance the relationship between healthcare systems through increased educational opportunities and improved patient care.

Objective 3. Work with Regional and statewide stakeholders to continue the successes achieved with the initial EMS Financial Conference.

Objective 4. Work with Regional stakeholders to continue the successes achieved with the initial “ALS Conference for the Experienced Provider”.

Objective 5. Work with Regional stakeholders to develop and provide a clearinghouse of educational opportunities within the Region.

*E. Estimated Cost:*

Historically the cost of providing the rural BLS conference has been \$11,000 annually. The conference has been able to break even most years with limited grant support. The RETAC has however written a CREATE grant to support local agencies to attend the conference. **The 2020 conference was cancelled due to the pandemic. The 2021 conference was held virtually in May and provided at no cost to the attendees.**

The expense of facility outreach education is frequently borne by the larger facility providing the service. In real dollars, this program when fully implemented would likely be valued well over \$200,000 annually. Efforts to support these programs using grant dollars will be considered and implemented if appropriate.

The cost of providing the initial ALS Conference was approximately \$20,000 which was offset by registration fees and donations. Hosting a conference in a “destination” comes with higher costs and the instructors for this conference are also much more expensive to provide. **The 2021 conference was cancelled due to the pandemic. The conference committee has selected a different location which will likely reduce the overall cost of the conference for 2022.**

The cost to host the initial EMS Financial conference was approximately \$15,000. **The requirement for a virtual conference in 2021 reduced expenses significantly but also reduces the networking value of the conference.** Instructors for this conference are again more expensive and the location also comes with facility costs. **The Plains to Peaks RETAC will continue to work closely with the Mile High RETAC to provide this type of education twice a year.**

*F. Desired Outcome:*

The rural BLS conference will continue to be a vital resource for providers to obtain high quality education. Success will be measured by attendance and attendee evaluations.

All facilities in the region will work collaboratively to enhance the level of communication and education across the RETAC. Success will be measured by the number of educational offerings and the evaluation of those programs by the attendees.

The purpose of the ALS Conference is to provide desperately needed critical care continuing education. Success will be measured by attendance and attendee evaluations.

The purpose of the EMS Financial Conference is to enhance the knowledge of attendees and to enhance sustainability of those services they lead. Success will be measured by attendance and attendee evaluations.

**Goal B:**

A. *Goal Statement:*

The Region will work with ground transport services to enhance the knowledge and understanding of pertinent financial and operational aspects of health care. Research regarding facility needs will grow from this initial groundwork with agencies.

B. *Background:*

Financially stable and operationally efficient ground ambulance services are vital within the entire EMTS system. While many services are operated by local government entities, the need to be financially and operationally sound is just as important as it would be for a privately owned service. The educational background for many service directors is often not steeped in financial or business experience so this goal is designed to support all services through research, education, and experience.

C. *Components Addressed:*

This goal addresses at least the following components: Finance, Clinical Care, Evaluation, Integration of Health Services, and others.

D. *Project Description:*

Objective 1. Work with Regional and statewide stakeholders to provide educational opportunities for agencies regarding EMS finances.

Objective 2. Work with local agencies to provide technical assistance with the Supplemental Reimbursement Program.

Objective 3. Work with local agencies to provide technical assistance with Cost Reporting for CMS.

E. *Estimated Cost:*

The cost to provide an annual EMS Financial Conference is estimated to be approximately \$15,000. Staff time to provide technical assistance for local agencies is estimated at \$5000 annually.

F. *Desired Outcome:*

Educating existing and future ambulance directors about the financial and operational aspects of operating a ground ambulance service will help to ensure stable and long-term delivery of high-quality clinical care. Surveying prior and after implementation of the objectives of this goal will be used to determine success and areas for improvement.

**Goal C:**

A. *Goal Statement:*

The Region will work to enhance the knowledge base of all stakeholders about current and pending rules and legislation which could affect any aspect of the EMTS system.

B. *Background:*

The successes experienced over the last ~~four~~ **eight** years of engaging an increasing number of stakeholders in the processes encouraged the RETAC to continue this goal. EMTS stakeholders are better able to advance and improve the system when they are involved in the growth.

C. *Components Addressed:*

This goal addresses at least the following components: Legislation and Regulation, Finance, Education, Clinical Care, and others.

G. *Project Description:*

Objective 1. Work with Regional stakeholders to increase knowledge and participation in the rule making and legislative processes.

Objective 2. Develop a cadre of stakeholders available to advocate for all agencies in the region.

Objective 3. Create a network and clearinghouse for information regarding rules and legislation which would be available to all stakeholders.

D. *Estimated Cost:*

It is difficult to estimate the cost of this type of goal. Time and travel are the obvious expenses and are estimated at \$7500 annually to include travel for RETAC officials and local stakeholders.

E. *Desired Outcome:*

Stakeholders within the EMTS system including leadership will become more knowledgeable about processes and issues. They will also become more engaged in making their views known to policy makers which will help to direct future changes.

**Goal D:**

A. *Goal Statement:*

The RETAC will continue to support the Regional Medical Direction/Continuous Quality Improvement programs.

B. *Background:*

The RETAC helped to enhance the medical direction in the frontier counties and to support medical direction across the region from its inception. Regional pre-hospital protocols have been in place for several years with local enhancements. The development of the RMD/CQI program started when additional funding became available in 2011. A CQI conference was hosted and ultimately a regional CQI committee was formed to support medical directors and agencies across the region. This committee had limited success and was disbanded in FY18. The RETAC then worked with local medical directors and other stakeholders to develop the Regional EMS Medical Director Committee. This group has achieved numerous successes ~~over the past twelve months~~ **since the inception in January 2018** and looks forward to a successful future. In the ~~previous~~ **FY19** cycle, the Plains to Peaks RETAC in conjunction with Southern RETAC and Southeastern RETAC developed new pre-hospital guidelines and a smart phone application which is available to all stakeholders in the three regions.

C. *Components Addressed:*

This goal addresses the following components: Medical Direction, Evaluation, Clinical Care, Education, and others.

D. *Project Description:*

Objective 1. Support the continued development of the Regional Medical Director Committee.

Objective 2. Assist agencies in implementing and conducting QA/QI processes that meet the requirements as set forth in legislation to comply with rules regarding discovery. This will be done in collaboration with the medical directors and EMS liaisons within the health care systems providing medical direction.

E. *Estimated Cost:*

Funding for this goal comes from the dedicated RMD grant from CDPHE in the amount of \$33,000 annually. Additional costs are met with in kind contributions from the agencies, facilities, and committee members.

F. *Desired Outcome:*

The Co-Medical Directors will lead a program with engaged medical directors who oversee robust CQI programs at the agency level. This will lead to quality data at the regional level which will help to direct education and clinical care.

**Goal E:**

A. *Goal Statement:*

The RETAC will research avenues to enhance the inclusion of facilities within the RETAC plans.

B. *Background:*

Facilities have been an integral part of the RETAC from the inception and have the ability to appoint voting members to the RETAC Council. However, the previous goals of the RETAC have focused primarily on prehospital emergency care. Efforts have been made in the past to enhance education for facilities with good success but no other specific projects were in place to address the needs of facilities.

The region includes two large, well organized health care systems plus three independent frontier facilities. The larger health care systems have shown the desire and ability to provide support to smaller institutions across Colorado. Additionally, there are two military facilities and numerous clinics, urgent care centers, and free-standing emergency departments.

C. *Components Addressed:*

This goal addresses the following components: Clinical Care, Education, Human Resources, Finance, and others.

D. *Project Description:*

Objective 1: Conduct research to determine current resources and needs of facilities within the region.

Objective 2: Consider development of programs to meet the needs of facilities within the region.

E. *Estimated Cost:*

Once again, the cost of this goal initially will be conducting interviews and research to determine resources and needs. This cost is estimated to be \$5000. Once potential needs are determined, the development and implementation of programs to meet those needs will require additional financial resources which may be estimated at \$20,000 depending on the needs.

F. *Desired Outcome:*

The initial outcome of this goal will be the enhanced inclusion of facilities needs in the planning process for the RETAC. The desired outcome of the goal will be to develop and ultimately implement potential programs to meet those needs.

**Goal F:**

A. *Goal Statement:*

~~The RETAC will support Cheyenne County stakeholders to consider options for sustainable ground ambulance services~~

The RETAC will work with all agencies and facilities across the region to consider and implement best practices for recruitment and retention of prehospital and facilities clinical staff.

B. *Background:*

~~Cheyenne County Ambulance Service has been providing emergency response since the late 1970's. The service has been able to sustain with minimal financial support from county government by applying for grants and utilizing an entirely volunteer staff. Over time, the ability to recruit new volunteers has been decreasing due to a decline in population which continues to age. Business interests are also not as willing to allow employees to leave suddenly for~~

~~emergency responses and the remaining population is seemingly not as interested in volunteering as they once were.~~

~~The call volume for CCAS is approximately 150 requests annually. Through conservative fiscal management and grants, the service has been able to maintain excellent vehicles and equipment but staffing continues to become more difficult. In addition, the payor mix has continued to see increases in Medicare, Medicaid, and Private Pay categories which are not offset by those patients covered by insurance.~~

~~Over the past twelve months, the RETAC has been working with local stakeholders to potentially collaborate with the local Critical Access Hospital to obtain "Cost Based Medicare Reimbursements" at 101% of cost. This project is still underway and will be the basis for further discussions with local officials. Other potential options may include but not be limited to paid staffing, joint staffing with the CAH, etc.~~

The RETAC has attempted to address recruitment and retention through goal setting over numerous planning cycles. While some successes have been noted, the issues continue to affect all agencies and facilities to some extent. The RETAC believes this continuing challenge must be addressed at a deeper level to achieve the successes required to truly effect long-lasting change.

#### C. *Components Addressed:*

This goal addresses the following components: Evaluation, Clinical Care, Education, Human Resources, and others.

#### D. *Project Description:*

~~Objective 1. Conduct a review of historic and current systems.~~

Write and be awarded an EMTS System Improvement Grant to conduct significant research into challenges and best practices across the state of Colorado.

~~Objective 2. Work with stakeholders to consider "Cost Based Reimbursement" through Critical Access Hospital.~~

Work with all RETAC across Colorado to conduct the research and provide valuable and reliable information to address the recruitment/retention issues affecting agencies/facilities in the RETAC

~~Objective 3. Work with stakeholders to research potential enhancements to the system.~~

Provide the final data to stakeholders from the local to the state level. This will include legislative staff.

~~Objective 4. Work with stakeholders to implement programs to support provision of sustainable ground ambulance services including all stakeholders in the process.~~

Assist agencies and facilities to begin implementation of best practices for recruitment and retention of clinical staff.

E. *Estimated Cost:*

~~As stated, the objectives of this goal involve staff hours to do research, conduct meetings, and involve local stakeholders in the process. The cost of this staff time and that of the local stakeholders may be estimated at approximately \$5000.~~

~~The cost of implementation of potential programs to support a sustainable ambulance service will be much greater. This will potentially require the local system to consider hiring full time staff in a partnership among local stakeholders. At a minimum, one FTE will cost \$60,000 annually and the sustainable option may be to hire more than one staff person.~~

The System Improvement grant application allows for up to \$30,000 for a one-time research project across the state of Colorado for rural and frontier agencies specifically. Funding to further include all prehospital agencies and facilities would involve additional research and could be estimated at one FTE, approximately \$75,000. Ongoing support to support the project would likely also require an FTE.

F. *Desired Outcome:*

~~The collaboration among local stakeholders will drive this goal and shape the final outcome. The desired outcome of this goal will be a sustainable ground ambulance service which can meet both the emergency response and the interfacility needs of the local EMTS system.~~

The research will provide consistent and valuable data to demonstrate challenges and expose best practices. These best practices will be shared and expanded to support all agencies and facilities across the region.